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Calendar of conferences and meetings: improved utilization of conference-servicing resources: meeting statistics of United Nations organs

Report of the Secretary-General

1. Annex I to the present document contains statistical data on the planned and actual utilization of conference resources allocated to a core sample of bodies that met in New York, Geneva and Vienna in 1998, compiled in accordance with the experimental methodology adopted as final by the Committee on Conferences at its 348th meeting, on 18 May 1993. The data include compliance and availability indices for assessing compliance with the deadlines for the submission of pre-session documentation and availability of such documentation for bodies based in New York, Geneva and Vienna, which were proposed by the Committee on Conferences at its substantive session of 1992.

2. In addition, data on utilization and availability of documentation at Nairobi are included, although information on late starting and early ending at that venue will be available as from 1999 only.

3. Annex II contains an analysis of the statistics, including the overall utilization factor, and a breakdown in terms of percentages of the meeting ratio and planning accuracy factor of the bodies in the sample.

4. In general, the bodies in the sample meet on a regular basis and it may be assumed that their performance is a reflection of United Nations bodies as a whole. Clearly, however, such indicators as the utilization factor can depend on particulars that do not apply to all United Nations bodies.

5. In accordance with decisions of the Committee on Conferences, the time utilized for informal meetings or consultations held before the start or after the adjournment of officially scheduled meetings is not included as time lost owing to late starting or early ending of meetings.

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6. An explanation of column headings that appear in the annexes follows:

A Number of meetings planned by a given organ at a scheduled session;

B Number of additional meetings held during the session;

C Number of meetings cancelled during the session;

D Number of meetings actually held;

E Number of unrelated reassignments;

F Amount of time lost owing to late starting/early ending (hours and minutes rounded to the nearest five minutes, e.g., 5.25 = 5 hours and 25 minutes);

MR Meeting ratio, calculated as meetings held as a percentage of meetings available to a given body (D as a percentage of A);

PAF Planning accuracy factor, calculated as meetings planned, minus additional meetings, minus cancellations, all as a percentage of meetings planned (A minus B minus C as a percentage of A);

UF Utilization factor, the percentage of available conference resources actually used by the organ in question. The utilization factor is based on the following calculation:

$$\frac{(A+B) - (C-E) - (F/3)}{(A+B)} = UF$$

In the foregoing calculation, the number of hours lost as a result of late starting and early ending is converted into the equivalent of meetings lost by dividing the total by three, as the standard meeting time is three hours. The number of unrelated assignments is subtracted from the number of cancelled meetings. The difference between the two and the number of meetings lost are then subtracted from the sum of meetings planned and additional meetings held. The result is expressed as a percentage of the sum of meetings planned and additional meetings held;

CI Compliance index, calculated as the percentage of pre-session documentation issued in accordance with the six-week rule;

AI Availability index, calculated as the actual rate of delivery presented on a week-by-week basis.

Annex I

A. New York

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) 3 February–27 March	75	0	11	64	2	4.10/34.15	85	85	71	2 305.00	NA						
ACABQ 4–22 May	29	0	8	21	4	1.30/13.30	72	72	69	900.00	NA						
ACABQ 1 September–18 December	156	0	45	111	29	7.25/65.00	71	71	74	4 345.00	NA						
Commission on Population and Development, thirty-first session 23–27 February	10	0	2	8	1	1.50/1.40	80	80	78	210.00	9	64	18	0	0	0	9
Commission for Social Development, thirty-sixth session 10–20 February	16	0	0	16	0	8.15/3.55	100	100	75	730.00	10	10	0	15	50	5	10
Commission on the Status of Women, forty-second session 2–13 March	20	5	0	25	0	7.05/2.15	125	75	88	560.00	7	0	0	7	26	22	30
Commission on Sustainable Development 20 April–1 May	38	5	8	35	5	13.15/4.05	92	66	80	1 040.00	35	4	19	8	8	4	22
Committee on Conferences 1–4 September	8	0	1	7	1	1.00/0.45	88	88	93	105.00	11	33	0	0	45	11	0
Committee on Contributions, fifty-eighth session 8–26 June	22	0	3	19	1	3.05/7.05	86	86	76	610.00	20	0	0	0	0	40	20
Committee on Information, twentieth session 4–15 May	19	0	7	12	5	6.50/7.00	63	63	65	830.00	25	0	25	0	25	0	25
Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations 12–23 January	20	0	5	15	1	8.25/4.35	75	75	58	780.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	75

A/AC.172/1999/3

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations 18–29 May	18	0	1	17	0	8.35/3.30	94	94	72	725.00	0	0	0	0	0	17	50
Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations 22–26 June	10	0	0	10	0	5.20/0.10	100	100	82	330.00	0	0	0	0	0	8	92
Committee for Programme and Coordination, thirty-eighth session, first part 9 June–3 July	40	9	11	48	0	10.50/0.15	120	50	70	665.00	50	7	14	7	7	0	0
Committee for Programme and Coordination, thirty-eighth session, second part 17–28 August	15	1	2	14	0	4.20/4.45	93	80	69	545.00	0	0	100	0	0	0	0
Disarmament Commission 6–28 April	52	0	8	44	6	16.50/22.10	85	85	71	2 340.00	50	0	0	0	0	50	0
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), organizational session 3–6 February	8	0	4	4	2	1.00/1.55	50	50	63	175.00	0	0	0	0	34	34	32
ECOSOC, resumed organizational session 7–8 May	4	0	3	1	1	0.20/0.00	25	25	47	20.00	0	0	5	9	9	14	45
ECOSOC, substantive session 6–31 July	70	5	16	59	9	14.30/14.25	84	70	78	1 735.00	9	0	11	7	9	9	22
General Assembly, resumed fifty-second session, Fifth Committee 11–29 May	28	7	1	34	0	8.30/2.15	121	71	87	645.00	52	3	3	4	9	8	5
General Assembly, resumed fifty-second session, Fifth Committee 17–21 August	5	1	1	5	1	4.15/0.00	100	60	76	255.00	83	0	0	9	0	0	8
General Assembly, fifty-third session, Plenary	139	3	36	106	21	19.10/26.25	76	72	79	2 735.00	NA						
General Assembly, fifty-third session, First Committee	34	2	4	32	2	3.20/17.35	94	82	75	1 255.00	NA						

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI	Al Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
General Assembly, fifty-third session, Special Political and Decolonization Committee	30	0	6	24	5	3.25/14.40	80	80	77	1 085.00	NA						
General Assembly, fifty-third session, Second Committee	77	3	20	60	14	12.25/25.35	78	70	77	2 280.00	NA						
General Assembly, fifty-third session, Third Committee	63	6	11	58	8	14.10/23.25	92	73	77	2 265.00	NA						
General Assembly, fifty-third session, Fifth Committee	128	10	8	130	3	17.10/16.55	102	86	88	2 045.00	NA						
General Assembly, fifty-third session, Sixth Committee 22 September–3 October	67	8	6	69	3	20.30/29.35	103	79	74	3 005.00	NA						
Group of Experts on Geographical Names, nineteenth session 12–23 January	4	0	0	4	0	1.05/1.35	100	100	78	160.00	0	2	0	16	23	4	55
Commission on Human Rights, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances 13–17 July	10	0	8	2	1	0.25/0.10	20	20	28	35.00	NA						
Human Rights Committee, sixty-second session 23 March–9 April	26	0	0	26	0	8.00/2.10	100	100	87	610.00	NA						
International Civil Service Commission, forty-eighth session 27 July–7 August	19	0	2	17	0	3.45/0.50	89	89	81	275.00	0	0	0	10	0	10	40
Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization 26 January–6 February	18	0	3	15	0	5.15/4.25	83	83	65	580.00	NA						
Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations 30 March–24 April	36	1	6	31	4	7.50/12.45	86	81	76	1 235.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	100

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Statistical Commission, Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination, nineteenth session 10–13 February	8	0	3	5	3	0.30/0.35	63	63	95	65.00	29	0	14	21	36	0	0
UNCITRAL, Working Group on International Contract Practices 2–13 March	18	0	1	17	1	2.40/0.00	94	94	95	160.00	58	0	25	0	17	0	0
UNCITRAL, thirty-first session 1–12 June	20	0	1	19	0	4.05/0.05	95	95	88	250.00	35	16	5	10	9	16	2
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Executive Board, first regular session 26–30 January	8	0	1	7	1	1.20/0.05	88	88	94	85.00	0	7	7	4	36	25	18
UNICEF Executive Board, annual session 1–5 June	10	0	1	9	0	2.15/2.35	90	90	74	290.00	29	0	0	0	43	14	14
UNICEF Executive Board, second regular session 8–11 September	8	0	1	7	1	2.05/2.00	88	88	83	245.00	7	0	2	23	7	21	37
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Executive Board, first regular session 19–23 January	10	0	0	10	0	1.55/0.00	100	100	94	115.00	0	0	4	22	9	39	26
UNDP/UNFPA, Executive Board, second regular session 20–24 April	10	0	0	10	0	2.25/0.35	100	100	90	180.00	6	0	0	19	50	6	19
UNDP/UNFPA, Executive Board, third regular session 14–22 September	10	1	0	11	0	3.20/7.25	110	90	67	645.00	7	0	4	11	19	15	41

B. Geneva

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Committee against Torture, twentieth session 4 April–22 May	28	0	1	27	0	4.10/11.35	96	96	78	945.00	41	43	0	7	0	9	0
Committee against Torture, twenty-first session 9–20 November	20	0	1	19	0	1.35/5.35	95	95	83	430.00	20	0	0	0	6	0	74
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, eighteenth session 27 April–15 May	30	0	2	28	0	3.25/1.05	93	93	88	270.00	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, nineteenth session 16 November–4 December	30	0	1	29	0	3.55/1.05	97	97	91	300.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, fifty-second session 2–20 March	30	0	0	30	0	3.40/2.05	100	100	94	345.00	49	9	0	15	0	0	27
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, fifty-third session 3–21 August	30	0	1	29	0	5.20/3.40	97	97	87	540.00	79	1	6	0	4	10	0
Committee on the Rights of the Child, seventeenth session 5–23 January	30	0	3	27	0	3.50/5.50	90	90	80	580.00	21	0	0	31	48	0	0
Committee on the Rights of the Child, eighteenth session 18 May–5 June	26	0	1	25	0	2.00/2.10	96	96	91	335.00	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Committee on the Rights of the Child, nineteenth session 21 September–9 October	30	0	2	28	0	2.25/2.40	93	93	88	305.00	100	0	0	0	0	0	0

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
ECOSOC Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods 29 June–10 July	10	0	0	10	0	0.00/1.00	100	100	97	60.00							
ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods 7–16 December	16	0	1	15	0	0.10/1.30	94	94	91	100.00							
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Executive Committee, forty-ninth session 5–9 October	11	0	1	10	0	2.30/4.45	91	91	69	435.00	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Commission on Human Rights, fifty-fourth session 16 March–24 April	54	12	2	64	0	2.20/7.35	119	74	92	595.00	66	23	0	7	2	2	0
Human Rights Committee, sixty-third session 13–31 July	30	0	1	29	0	3.40/0.10	97	97	92	230.00	92	0	2	0	1	3	2
Human Rights Committee, sixty-fourth session 19 October–6 November	30	0	1	29	0	4.55/0.20	97	97	91	315.00	75	25	0	0	0	0	0
International Law Commission, fiftieth session 20 April–12 June	63	0	2	61	0	5.30/5.20	97	97	91	650.00	38	0	0	0	0	0	38
Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories 2–4 March	6	0	1	5	0	0.40/3.05	83	83	63	225.00	0	60	0	40	0	0	0
Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories 21 July	1	0	0	1	0	0.10/0.00	100	100	97	10.00							

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	AI Issued by end of week: CI	6	5	4	3	2	1
Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 23–25 June	6	0	0	6	0	0.40/0.00	100	100	96	40.00							
Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 8–9 September	4	0	0	4	0	0.55/0.25	100	100	89	80.00							
Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2 and 6 October	2	0	0	2	0	0.35/1.00	100	100	74	95.00							
Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities — Working Group on Indigenous Populations 27–31 July	10	3	0	13	0	4.10/2.50	130	70	82	420.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, fiftieth session 3–28 August	30	1	1	30	0	3.25/3.05	100	93	90	390.00							
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Trade and Development Board, seventeenth executive session 8 May	1	0	0	1	0	1.10/0.35	100	100	52	105.00	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
UNCTAD, Trade and Development Board, eighteenth executive session 10 July	2	0	0	2	0	0.30/0.15	100	100	88	45.00	90	0	0	0	0	10	0
UNCTAD, Trade and Development Board, forty-fifth session 12–23 October	20	4	0	24	0	3.40/5.20	120	80	88	540.00	98	0	0	0	0	2	0

C. Vienna

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions 15–19 June	10	0	1	9	0	0.05/7.00	90	90	70	425.00							
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, seventh session 21–30 April	16	0	1	15	0	4.40/4.40	94	94	75	560.00	6	6	4	5	2	5	44
Commission on Narcotic Drugs, forty-first session 11–13 March	6	0	0	6	0	1.50/1.56	100	100	83	225.00	0	0	9	11	9	23	32
Commission on Narcotic Drugs, forty-first session, Committee of the Whole 16–20 March	10	2	0	12	0	3.50/0.40	120	80	92	270.00	2	6	1	20	35	18	18
Commission on Narcotic Drugs acting as the preparatory body for the special session of the General Assembly on international drug control 16–20 March	10	0	0	10	0	3.40/0.05	100	100	90	225.00	2	6	1	20	35	18	18
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, thirty-fifth session 9–20 February	19	0	1	18	0	5.30/3.55	95	95	80	565.00	5	9	9	7	10	19	12
COPUOS — Legal Subcommittee, thirty-seventh session 23 March–3 April	20	0	0	13	0	4.35/6.35	65	100	81	670.00	13	0	0	7	33	7	40
COPUOS, forty-first session 3–12 June	16	0	0	16	0	4.30/2.20	100	100	86	410.00	76	0	0	0	0	2	22

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
International Narcotics Control Board, sixty-fourth session 18–29 May	20	0	0	20	0	0.25/1.10	100	100	97	95.00	5	7	5	18	14	17	27
International Narcotics Control Board, sixty-fifth session 2–19 November	28	0	0	28	0	0.50/0.00	100	100	99	50.00	0	0	3	8	6	22	36
UNCITRAL, Working Group on Electronic Commerce, thirty-second session 19–30 January	18	0	0	18	0	2.55/0.40	100	100	93	215.00	0	0	8	0	0	25	67
UNCITRAL, Working Group on International Contract Practices, thirty-second session 5–16 October	18	0	1	17	0	1.50/0.30	94	94	90	140.00	NA						
United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, forty-seventh session 25–29 May	10	0	1	9	0	0.05/0.30	90	90	88	35.00	60	10	20	0	0	0	10

D. Nairobi

	A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*F*	*MR*	*PAF*	*UF*	*Minutes*	*CI*	*AI* Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Fifth special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) 20–22 May	6	0	0	6	0		100	100	77	253.00							
High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials of the Governing Council of UNEP 2–4 March	5	1	0	6	0	1.10/2.05	120	80	82	195.00							

Annex II

Analysis of the statistics

1. The overall utilization factor for 1998 was 81 per cent. This figure is computed by totalling the data in the six columns for all bodies in the three locations and treating them as if they reflected a single body, as follows:

Duty station	*A*	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*F (minutes)*	*UF*
New York	1 416	67	255	1 253	135	39 620	77
Geneva	619	22	26	615	–	10 215	87
Vienna	191	2	4	182	–	3 460	88
	2 242	**91**	**286**	**2 050**	**136**	**53 295**	**81**

2. The overall utilization factor for 1998, 81 per cent, is the same as it was in 1997 (see para. 1 of the report of the Secretary-General of 14 July 1998, A/AC.178/1998/3). New York, however, showed a one percentage point drop, this slight decrease being due to a downward trend in utilization on the part of some bodies of the Economic and Social Council, as well as the addition to the statistical table of some bodies not included in the sample prior to 1998. These two factors offset an improvement in the utilization factor by other bodies.

3. The utilization factors for the bodies in the sample for the period from 1996 to 1998 are presented below in tabular form for purposes of comparison:

Utilization factor (percentage)	*Number of sessions*		
	1996	*1997*	*1998*
0–19	–	–	–
20–29	–	–	1
30–39	–	–	–
40–49	1	3	2
50–59	–	2	2
60–69	5	6	8
70–79	12	17	24
80–100	60	46	46
Total number	**78**	**74**	**82**

4. In 1996 and 1997, 1 per cent and 4 per cent of the bodies, respectively, fell in the lowest range of 0–49 per cent. In 1998, 2 per cent of the bodies fell in that range. In 1996 and 1997, 22 per cent and 34 per cent of the bodies, respectively, used 50 to 79 per cent of their resources; in 1998, 42 per cent of the bodies did so. As to compliance with the benchmark, in 1996 and 1997, 77 per cent and 62 per cent of the bodies, respectively, showed a utilization factor of 80 per cent or higher. In 1998, 56 per cent of the bodies in the sample utilized 80 per cent or more of their available conference-servicing resources.

5. The figures are summarized as follows:

	Percentage of sessions held		
Percentage of resources utilized	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*
80–100	77	62	56
50–79	22	34	42
0–49	1	4	2

6. The following is a breakdown of the meeting ratios of the bodies in the sample for 1998, including Nairobi:

Percentage	*Number of sessions*
10–19	–
20–29	2
30–39	–
40–49	–
50–59	1
60–69	3
70–79	5
80–89	13
90–100+	60
Total	**84**

7. Thus, in 1998, 13 per cent of the bodies in the sample had meeting ratios below 80 per cent; 87 per cent had meeting ratios above 80 per cent. Seventy-one per cent of the bodies had meeting ratios of 90 per cent or higher, i.e. 7 per cent less than in 1997.

8. The following is a breakdown of the planning accuracy factors of the bodies in the sample for 1998, including Nairobi:

Percentage	*Number of sessions*
0–39	2
40–49	–
50–59	2
60–69	4
70–79	12
80–89	18
90–100	46
Total	**84**

9. Thus, in 1998, 24 per cent of the bodies had planning accuracy factors below 80 per cent; 76 per cent of the bodies had factors above 80 per cent. Fifty-five per cent of the bodies had planning accuracy factors of 90 to 100 per cent, or a decrease of 5 per cent over 1997.